Smoke Unthreading

John Christenson
& I know air is cold
beneath the tree.

& there is a cause I don’t know.
Won’t clap for it, never knew
the seismic frames trembling
under the ownerless footpath. Little breath

was little worth, pester & litany;
index pages on branches,
cradle of twigs, a cry—
a face on the window w/ lips

tumbling slowly, silently
tumbling: no longer after the same music.

I never knew my hand, its claim;
the slip-tongue wind folding
across my sidelong channels. My will
was my own? It passed
w/ the chastened alley’s trash
& slunk heavy to its begging corner.

I brokered deals w/ canines
sparked in streetlight glares.
There is a tongue
running over those teeth,
cutting itself & spilling words; the blood
I tracked through the living room.
Well, this newspaper chandelier burns a pleasant black stain.

On concrete w/ the dead matchstick
I draw again in soot
my silent reflection, imposed over lush cold dome.

& in that song came roosting
a hindered whistle, tracing casual slopes & turns through pillars of salt poised on my tongue.

& I know the sun leaks untraceable rhythms.